

Adolphus Heiman House
900 Jefferson Street, northwest corner of
Jefferson Street and Ninth Avenue North
Nashville
Davidson County
Tennessee

HABS No. TENN-25

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TENN-25

ADOLPHUS HEIMAN HOUSE

Location: 900 Jefferson Street, northwest corner of Jefferson Street and Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee

Statement of Significance: Designed and built by Nashville architect Adolphus Heiman for use as his own residence, this mid 19th-century, one-story brick house was an important expression of the Italian-villa style with modifications. /Demolished in 1976./

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1858.
2. Architect: Adolphus Heiman.
3. Original and subsequent owners: On November 4, 1849, Adolphus Heiman purchased lots 143 and 144 from Dr. David T. McGavock; on September 17, 1852, he purchased lot 142, corner of McLemore and Jefferson Street, from Dr. McGavock. (McLemore became Ninth Avenue North when Nashville streets were changed to a numerical system in 1904.) In 1858, Heiman designed, built, and occupied his house. Some accounts indicate that the house was lived in by Major Alexander Thurneck and his family during the Union occupation of Nashville in 1862. (The Federal Army confiscated a large area of North Nashville between the State Capitol Building and Heiman's house for a camp during the period of occupation.) Heiman died in November 1862. On January 19, 1866, his house was purchased by a James Doyle--probably as an investment--from Louis Heiman Koenigsberg of Brooklyn, New York, and Henrietta Heiman Koenigsberg, a citizen of "Potsdam, the Kingdom of Prussia, Europe." Doyle died on August 8, 1868. There is no record of his having lived in the Heiman house during the two-year period, 1866-68. Twelve years of litigation followed his death. Doyle had never married; the courts therefore had to determine his rightful heirs. More than a dozen individuals filed for a share of the estate--his partners, his relatives, and even the friends in whose home he died. In 1880 the Clerk and Master of the Chancery Court disposed of the Heiman property at public auction. On March 19 of that year, William Kempkau, a grocer located at 240 Jefferson Street, was high bidder

in the auction. (In 1858, when the Heiman house was under construction, Kempkau, then age sixteen, had helped Heiman with the work.) Not until 1884 was Kempkau's residence listed at the corner of McLemore and Jefferson Streets. It is not known who occupied the house during the eighteen year period 1866-84. Charles W. Kempkau, son of William Kempkau, lived in the house with his mother Emma L. Kempkau and a sister Clara Agnes until 1928. (Charles Kempkau long operated a building supply house at 812 Third Avenue North.) On May 14, 1928, Dr. Julius A. McMillan bought the house from Emma L. Kempkau. (In 1930 Dr. McMillan was Director of Hubbard Hospital and Training School. Hubbard Hospital continues in operation in Nashville today.) On June 17, 1940, Elizabeth D. McMillan purchased the Heiman property from her husband. On October 26, 1949, the Union Protective Insurance Company acquired the property from Mrs. McMillan. On March 8, 1969, the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc., bought the property. The house and an addition of 1950 were demolished in February 1976 and the ground prepared for construction of a new building, which will be occupied by the Tennessee Baptist M. E. Convention. At the time Heiman purchased the three parcels of land, he had a 300-foot frontage. At the time of demolition, the property had about the same depth as when originally laid out by McGavock, but the frontage had been reduced to 150 feet. (A "Burger King" has been situated next to the Heiman property for several years, and perhaps occupies the rest of the frontage.)

4. Alterations and additions: When photographed by HABS in 1971, extensive renovation for commercial uses had obliterated much of the building's original appearance, and most of its interior fittings had been removed. (One of the two marble mantels removed by Mr. Charles Kempkau--who occupied the house until April 1928--and installed in his house at 1300 Graybar Lane, Nashville, is shown in a photograph in Huddleston.) An addition was made to the house in 1950 to accommodate the Union Protective Funeral Service--owned by the Union Protective Insurance Company. The house and the addition of 1950 were demolished on February 6, 1976.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Adolphus Heiman was born in Potsdam, Prussia, on April 17, 1809. His father was superintendent of "Sans Souci," the summer palace of the kings of Prussia. Heiman's education included the study of the English language; he also learned the trade of a stonemason. In April 1834, the great scientist Baron Alexander von Humboldt gave Heiman a letter of introduction, to take with him to the United States. Heiman departed

Prussia for the "New Continent" two years later. By 1841 he had settled in the German community of North Nashville and had set up a stonecutter's shop. (In Frank, a check stub of 1841 is cited which shows that Heiman was paid \$31.87 for steps and repairs at the old University of Nashville.) In 1845 Heiman submitted a castellated Gothic Revival design for the Tennessee State Capitol to be constructed in Nashville. The commission, however, went to William Strickland for his Greek Revival design. Heiman and Strickland, although rival architects, became firm friends. Heiman, a Mason, was present at the Masonic rites honoring Strickland when the Capitol cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1845. On December 20 of that year, the Nashville Orthopolitan listed Heiman as one of four architects in the city--the others were Ackeroid, H. M. Brown & Sons, and Strickland.

Although Heiman was a prolific architect whose work included a wide range of building types, few Heiman-designed structures remain in Nashville today. The neo-Gothic Lindsley Hall (later Nashville Children's Museum and then Nashville Children's Theatre) (HABS No. TENN-18), built in 1853, and at that time the largest building on the campus of the University of Nashville, is now owned by the Metropolitan government and is being renovated for use as office space. A map of 1860 recently located in the National Archives identifies Heiman as the architect of "Belmont," a residence built in 1850 for Colonel J. A. S. Acklen (now Acklen Hall, Belmont College) (HABS No. TENN-56), which, because of its similarities to Strickland's work, has often been attributed to the latter. The following Nashville structures designed by Heiman are now gone: The Gothic Revival First Baptist Church (later the First Lutheran Church), built c. 1837, was razed in 1940. The castellated Tennessee Hospital for the Insane (Central State Psychiatric Hospital), built 1849-51 and considered a model institution in its day, was demolished c. 1975. The Adelphi Theatre, built near the Capitol in 1850, burned around Christmas time in 1902 (at that time it was called the Grand). The Bijou Theatre of 1904, built on the foundations of the Adelphi, was demolished in 1958 as a part of the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project. The Davidson County Jail, a stone and iron structure built on North Front Street in 1852, was demolished c. 1934. In addition to these structures, Heiman in 1850 also designed the first suspension bridge across the Cumberland River (700 feet long and 110 feet above low-water mark). The bridge was constructed by Capt. M. D. Field, brother of Cyrus, with Heiman employed in a consultative capacity. During construction, when Field departed considerably from Heiman's design, Heiman protested in writing, dissociating himself from the undertaking. In 1855, the bridge collapsed, vindicating Heiman's protests. Repaired, the bridge stood until 1862, when it was destroyed by Confederate forces. It was replaced with another bridge in the

last quarter of the 19th century. In 1860 or 1861, Heiman worked on both Fort Heiman and Fort Henry--located on opposite sides of the Tennessee River. Fort Henry was completed; Fort Heiman was not--although its battlements are still there, grown over with trees.

Elected adjutant lieutenant to Colonel William B. Campbell, First Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers, Heiman participated in the charge at the fortress of Monterey in October 1846. He wrote a concise account of the Mexican campaign for the Tennessee Historical Society. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Heiman was elected Colonel of the Tenth Tennessee Regiment, "the Sons of Erin" (organized on May 29, 1861), and served with distinction until he died from an illness on November 16, 1862, at Jackson, Mississippi. Seven years later he was reinterred in the Confederate Circle of Nashville's Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Heiman left a number of important documents to the Tennessee Historical Society--among them his letter of introduction from von Humboldt, a letter to John Meigs concerning the suspension bridge across the Cumberland, and a copy of Vignola's Five Orders of Architecture.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old map: Map, "City of Nashville and Edgefield, Davidson County, Tennessee." Published by Hayden and Booth, Civil Engineers and Surveyors 1860. Scale 400 feet to one inch. P. S. Duval and Sons, Lithographic Establishment S. W. corner of 5th and Minor Streets, Philadelphia. In Reference Collection, Cartographic Division, National Archives Building, Washington, D. C.
2. Old views: Two views of the house illustrate the Huddleston article, "Big Wheels and Little Wagons." One, an old picture provided by Charles W. Kempkau--an inhabitant of the house for 48 years--shows the structure in its prime as a residence. The other, a photo of 1959, shows an addition on the north. In both photos, there is an arched and balustraded porch on the east side--north of the main entrance--which was no longer present when the structure was photographed by HABS in 1971. Both photos also show an uncovered porch with cast-iron grill on the east end--still present in 1971--a type frequently found on Nashville houses of the period.
3. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Nashville. Tennessee Historical Society. Heiman Papers. Manuscript Collection. Letter, Alexander von Humboldt, April 8, 1834.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Clayton, W. W. History of Davidson County, Tennessee, 1780-1880, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers. Nashville, Tennessee: Charles Elder--Bookseller, 1971 (reproduction of 1880 publication).

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Parrent, H. Clinton, Jr. "Adolphus Heiman and the Building Methods of Two Centuries." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XII (Sept. 1953), 204-212.

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buildings in Nashville," Antiques, August 1971.

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the summer of 1971 as part of a cooperative project of the National Park Service, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee. The work represented the second phase of an extensive recording program to document the historic architecture of Middle Tennessee and involved the recording of structures in the counties surrounding Nashville.

The project was under the direction of James C. Massey, at that time Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Supervisor of the recording team was Prof. Roy C. Pledger of Texas A & M University. The team was composed of John W. Kiser, Architectural Historian (University of Tennessee); Daryl P. Fortier, Architect (University of Minnesota); and student architects Gilbert M. Glaubinger (Rhode Island School of Design), Steve P. Roberts (Ohio State University, and Barry S. Williams (Texas A & M University). Photographs were made by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer. Additional research was done in 1976 by Ursula Theobald, Writer-Editor, HABS, with generous assistance from Leonard Marsh, Architect, Metropolitan Historical Commission, Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, who consulted local records to complete the chain of title for the Adolphus Heiman House and to resolve questions on other Heiman-designed structures.